

***IN THE CLAIMS***

Claim 1 (Cancelled).

Claim 2 (Previously presented): Device as claimed in claim 9, wherein at least two notches are located next to one another.

Claim 3 (Previously presented): Device as claimed in claim 9, wherein the device includes at least two notches staggered on opposite sides of the border of the sample application opening.

Claim 4 (Previously presented): Device as claimed in 9, wherein at least one of the surfaces forming the inner surface of the channel is hydrophilized.

Claim 5 (Previously presented): Device as claimed in claim 4, wherein the exposed surface opposite to the notch is hydrophilized.

Claim 6 (Cancelled).

Claim 7 (Previously presented): Device as claimed in claim 12, wherein a layer of oxidized aluminium is used for the hydrophilization.

Claim 8 (Cancelled).

Claim 9 (Currently amended): A device for withdrawing samples of liquid samples for analytical elements, wherein the device comprises:

a carrier having a carrier surface defined by opposite carrier ends,

a detection element having opposite first and second ends, and

a cover having a surface ~~facing the carrier and defined by opposite~~ first and second ~~opposite outer edges, extending away from the surface, the surface facing the carrier and the second outer edge facing the first end of the detection element, the~~ opposite outer edges, extending away from the surface, the surface facing the carrier and the second outer edge facing the first end of the detection element, the cover cooperating with the carrier surface and with the detection element to form a capillary-active channel, the channel having a sample application opening defined by at least one border positioned at one of the carrier ends, the channel extending at least from the opening to the second end of the detection element, such that the detection element is downstream of the opposite first and second outer edges of the cover and wherein at least one notch in the form of a partial groove and having a width less than

that of the channel is positioned at the at least one border of the sample application opening of the channel so that one side of the border of the sample application opening is at least partially interrupted by the at least one notch and the surface facing the channel opposite to the at least one notch is exposed.

Claim 10 (Previously presented): Device as claimed in claim 9, further comprising a second cover and an intermediate layer positioned between the second cover and the carrier.

Claim 11 (Previously presented): Device as claimed in claim 4, wherein the hydrophilization is achieved by a hydrophilic material.

Claim 12 (Previously presented): Device as claimed in claim 4, wherein the hydrophilization is achieved by a hydrophilic layer.

Claim 13 (Previously presented): Device as claimed in claim 5, wherein the hydrophilization is achieved by a hydrophilic material.

Claim 14 (Previously presented): Device as claimed in claim 5, wherein the hydrophilization is achieved by a hydrophilic layer.

Claim 15 (Previously presented): Device as claimed in claim 14, wherein a layer of oxidized aluminium is used for the hydrophilization.

Claim 16 (Currently amended): A method for withdrawing a liquid sample into an analytical element, the method comprising the steps of providing a device that comprises a carrier having a carrier surface defined by opposite carrier ends, a detection element having opposite first and second ends, and a cover having a surface ~~facing the carrier and opposite~~ defined by opposite first and second outer edges, extending away from the surface, the surface facing the carrier and the second outer edge facing the first end of the detection element, the cover cooperating with the carrier surface and the detection element to form a capillary-active channel having a sample application opening defined by at least one border positioned at one of the carrier ends, the channel extending at least from the opening to the second end of the detection element such that the detection element is downstream of the opposite first and second outer edges of the cover, and wherein at least one notch in the form of a

partial groove and having a width less than that of the channel is positioned at the at least one border of the sample application opening of the channel so that one side of the border of the sample application opening is at least partially interrupted by the at least one notch and the surface opposite to the at least one notch facing the channel is exposed and contacting the border of the sample application opening adjacent to the notch with the liquid sample so that the liquid sample is transported by capillary forces into the channel.

Claim 17 (Currently amended): A device for withdrawing samples of liquid samples for analytical elements, wherein the device comprises:

a carrier having a carrier surface defined by opposite carrier ends,

a detection element having a reagent-impregnated membrane with opposite first and second ends, and

a cover having a surface ~~facing the carrier and opposite~~ defined by opposite first and second outer edges, extending away from the surface, the surface facing the carrier and the second outer edge facing the first end of the detection element, and the cover cooperating with the carrier surface and the detection element to form a capillary-active channel, the channel having a sample application opening defined by at least one border positioned at one of the carrier ends and extending at least from the opening to the second end of the membrane, such that the detection element is downstream of the opposite first and second outer edges of the cover, and

wherein at least one notch in the form of a partial groove is positioned at the at least one edge of the sample application opening of the channel so that one side of the border of the sample application opening is at least partially interrupted by the at least one notch and the surface facing the channel opposite to the at least one notch is exposed.

Claim 18 (Previously presented): Device as claimed in claim 17, further comprising a second cover and an intermediate layer positioned between the second cover and the carrier.

Claim 19 (Previously presented): Device as claimed in claim 17 wherein at least two notches are located next to one another.

Claim 20 (Previously presented): Device as claimed in claim 17 wherein the device includes at least two notches staggered on opposite sides of the border of the sample application opening.

Claim 21 (Previously presented): as claimed in 17 wherein at least one of the surfaces forming the inner surface of the channel is hydrophilized.

Claim 22 (Previously presented): Device as claimed in claim 21 wherein the exposed surface opposite to the notch is hydrophilized.

Claim 23 (Previously presented): Device as claimed in claim 21 wherein a layer of oxidized aluminium is used for the hydrophilization.

Claim 24 (Previously presented): Device as claimed in claim 21 wherein the hydrophilization is achieved by a hydrophilic layer.

Claim 25 (Previously presented): Device as claimed in claim 21 wherein the hydrophilization is achieved by a hydrophilic material.

Claim 26 (Previously presented): A device for withdrawing samples of liquid samples for analytical elements, wherein the device comprises:

a carrier having a carrier surface defined by opposite carrier ends, and

a cover having a surface that faces the carrier and that cooperates with the carrier surface to form a capillary-active channel, the channel having a sample application opening defined by at least one border positioned at one of the carrier ends and wherein at least one notch in the form of a partial groove and having a width less than the channel's width is positioned at the at least one border of the sample application opening of the channel so that one side of the border of the sample application opening is at least partially interrupted by the at least one notch and the surface facing the channel opposite to the at least one notch is exposed.

Claim 27 (Previously presented): Device as claimed in claim 26, further comprising a second cover and an intermediate layer positioned between the second cover and the carrier.

Claim 28 (Previously presented): Device as claimed in claim 26 wherein at least two notches are located next to one another.

Claim 29 (Previously presented): Device as claimed in claim 26 wherein the device includes at least two notches staggered on opposite sides of the border of the sample application opening.

Claim 30 (Previously presented): as claimed in 26 wherein at least one of the surfaces forming the inner surface of the channel is hydrophilized.

Claim 31 (Previously presented): Device as claimed in claim 30 wherein the exposed surface opposite to the notch is hydrophilized.

Claim 32 (Previously presented): Device as claimed in claim 30 wherein a layer of oxidized aluminium is used for the hydrophilization.

Claim 33 (Previously presented): Device as claimed in claim 30 wherein the hydrophilization is achieved by a hydrophilic layer.

Claim 34 (Previously presented): Device as claimed in claim 30 wherein the hydrophilization is achieved by a hydrophilic material.